

Project title: Tactical Agriculture (TA_g) Train the Trainer Workshop

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Abstract

Workshops were held to teach northeast region extension educators use of a proven educational approach called Tactical Agriculture (TA_g). While most extension educators conduct in-field workshops to disseminate current information and strategies relative to integrated crop management (ICM) and integrated pest management (IPM) to producers, most educators do not design programs in such a way as to maximize advantages of sound educational design for adult learners. The TA_g program specifically is an experiential, hands-on season-long training program for small groups of field crop producers in local areas. The TA_g program has been used successfully in New York State to teach producers to better manage field crops, protect the environment, reduce health risks, and enhance their own long-term viability by implementing specific targeted IPM and ICM practices. Producers are actively integrated into the growing-season-long educational program, which focuses on the collection of data from their fields in conjunction with meetings to discuss critical pest and crop management issues that arise during the growing season. The program has had remarkable success in encouraging participants to adopt IPM and ICM strategies. Impacts of the program are measured by pre- and post-testing of subject matter and an exit survey to determine the percentage of adoption of IPM and ICM practices taught to producers. Two separate 2 day workshops were held on design, teaching, and evaluating an effective TA_g program. The workshops were very well received with 15 out of 20 participants conducting or developing new TA_g or TA_g-like programs in the Northeast.

Proposal performance targets

Forty educators will be identified as potential beneficiaries of a workshop designed to train educators to use an innovative IPM educational program. Of these 40 educators, 20 will participate in the workshop. From this group, 10 extension educators will successfully design and administer at least one TA_g program during the year after the completion of the training workshop. As a result, 40 to 80 producers will be reached with the TA_g program during the year following the training workshop.

We will design a program to train Extension Educators and other professional agriculture educators in the Northeast US to design and implement Tactical Agriculture, or TA_g, programs in their county, region or state. This project involves identifying educators who seek innovative educational opportunities for IPM programming. Recruitment of these individuals will begin

with communications with state IPM coordinators across the Northeast. Experts in adult agricultural education will be identified as instructors, and they will work directly with members of NYS IPM who use the innovative TAg program to design a curriculum for training educators to use a TAg program. Workshop participants who implement a TAg program will report back to the workshop trainers to indicate the usefulness of the program in their setting, improvements needed, and behavior changes that take place with targeted producers.

Milestones

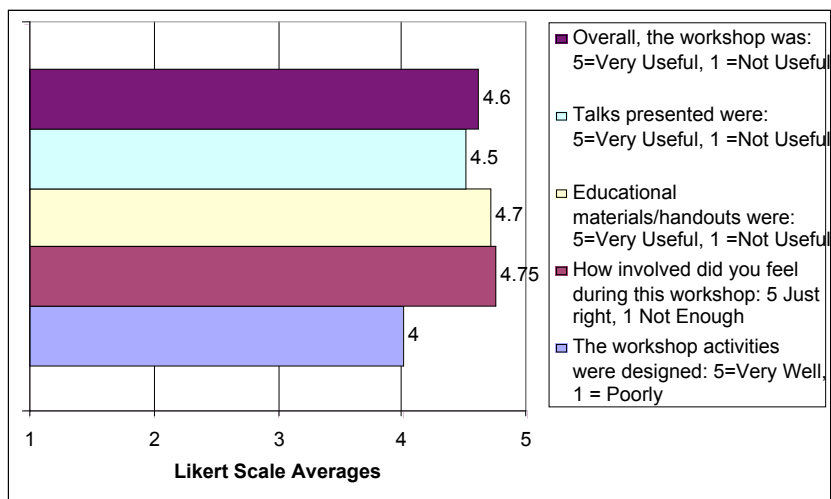
Workshops were developed to introduce northeast extension personnel and other agricultural educators to the use development and implementation of an effective in-the-field educational approach: the Tactical Agriculture Team (TAg) Program. Workshops were offered on February 1 and 2, 2007 at the Desmond Inn in Albany, NY and February 14-15, 2008 at the Holiday Inn in Albany NY. The workshops were very well received by the participants as shown in the outcomes and evaluations that follow.

Outcomes

The two workshops attracted a total of twenty participants. Thirteen educators attending were from Cornell Cooperative Extension, 1 from the NYS IPM program, 1 from NE SARE, 2 from the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension, 1 from the Maine Department of Agriculture and 2 the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project in cooperation with Tufts University. A post-training survey was implemented to assess effectiveness of the training workshop.

Participants overwhelmingly reported finding the workshops useful to their work (Figure 1). Participants reported finding the prepared talks and educational materials and handouts very useful. The professional educators that attended the workshop indicated that they felt actively involved in the workshop and the hands-on activities were very well received.

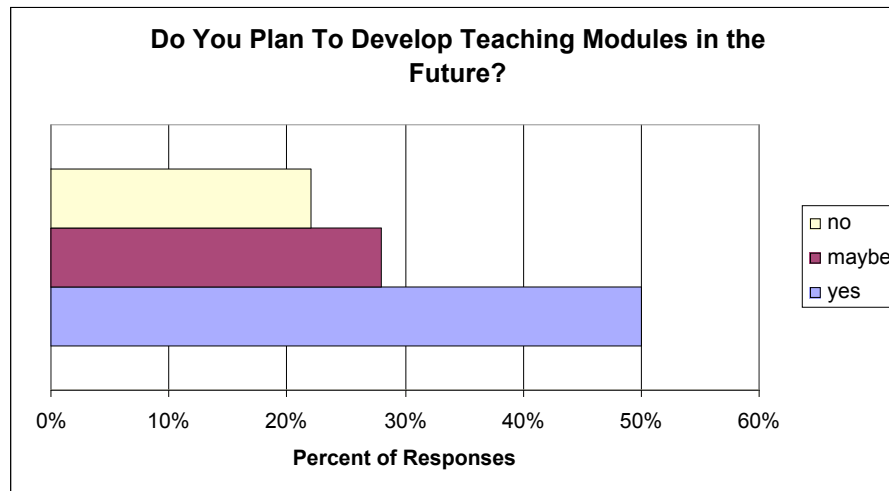
Figure 1: Usefulness of aspects of TAg Train the Trainer



A component of the training was discussion of the preparation and use of targeted TAg educational training modules. A teaching module is much like a pre-made educational curriculum for anyone who wants or needs to teach a subject. Over 75% of the participants in the

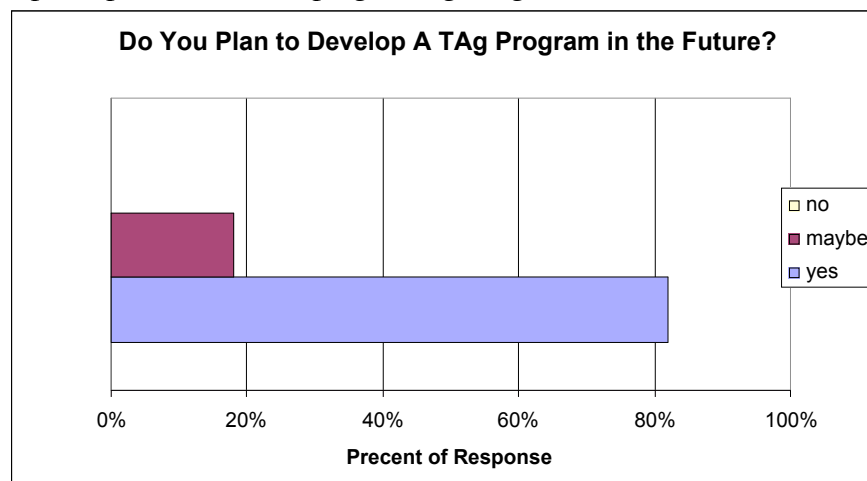
workshop indicated that they would or might prepare teaching modules on different agricultural subjects that could be shared between educators (Figure 2). .

Figure 2: Responses to developing future teaching modules



When asked if they would seek to apply training to development of a local TAG-like effort an overwhelming percentage of participants indicated that they would develop a TAG type educational program (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Participants plans for developing a TAG Program in the future



Workshop participants indicated the workshop successfully met their learning expectations (Figure 4) and stated they would recommend the training to other colleagues (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Did the workshop meet expectations and needs

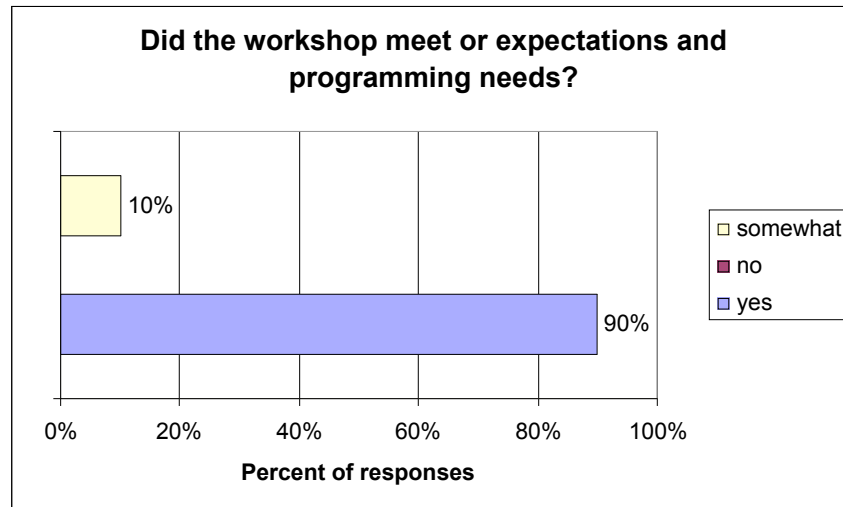
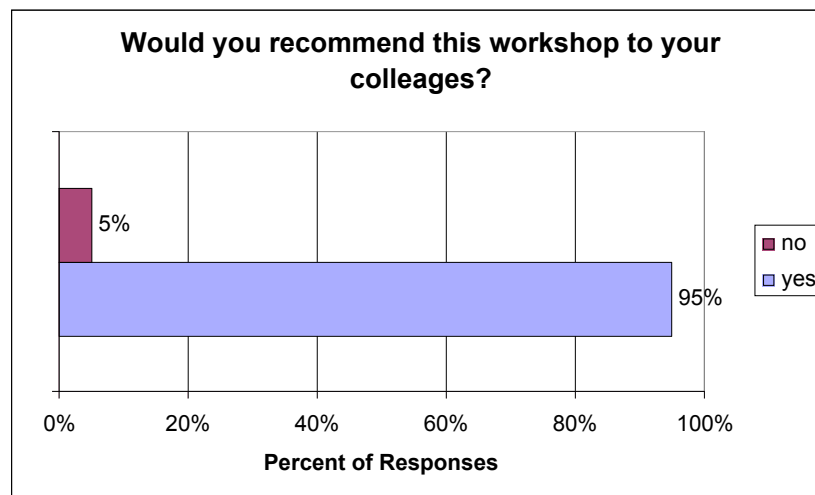


Figure 5: Would participants recommend this workshop to colleagues



A resource and planning book was developed for the training to help guide the participants in the process of developing a locally adapted TAg type program. Each workshop presentation had a corresponding activity designed to help educators plan each step of their TAg program development. As a result of the training a number of TAg-like programs were implemented or are planned. Table 1 summarizes new TAg Program activities initiated by workshop participants.

Table 1: Participants conduction or developing TAg teams

Name	Organization	TAg Team	Number enrolled
Kathi Evans	CCE-Madison Co.	1 Alfalfa-Corn TAg	5 growers
Jeff Miller	CCE-Oneida Co.	2 Soybean TAg	8 growers
Aaron Gabriel	CCE-Washington Co.	1 Bio-fuels TAg*	8 growers
Brian Aldrich	CCE-Cayuga C.	1 Soybean TAg	6 growers
Mike Stanyard	CCE-Northeast Dairy and Field Crops Team	2 Soybean TAg	10 growers
Janice Degni	CCE-Southeast Dairy and Field Crops Team	Developed a set of TAg-like Soybean meetings	Many
Elizabeth Lamb	Cornell/NYS IPM	Greenhouse Biological Control Train the Trainer Program *	25 Growers
Kathy Murray	Maine Department of Agriculture	1 Greenhouse IPM TAg*	6 Producers
Patricia Westenbroek	CCE-Sullivan County	Corn/Livestock IPM TAg	6 growers
Mike Dennis	CCE-Seneca County	1 soybean TAg	5 growers
Jeff Miller	CCE-Oneida County	1 Soybean TAg	5 growers
Anita Deming	CCE-Essex County	Corn/Alfalfa/Livestock IPM-like TAg meetings	6 producers
Blake Putman	CCE-Clinton County	Livestock IPM TAg-like meeting	15 producers
Joseph Lawrence	CCE-Lewis County	Corn/Alfalfa IPM like TAg meeting	8 growers
Brian Aldrich	CCE- Cayuga County	1 Soybean	5 growers
Masoud Hashemi	U. Conn	Bio-fuels TAg*	NA
Joyce Meader	U. Conn	1 Dairy TAg*	NA

The following comments capture the general feeling offered by participant on the usefulness of the workshops.

- “The small group size was an advantage for the activities”
- “I’ll use many of the tools re: adult education/ technology transfer, impacts and evaluation”
- “The discussion on evaluation is something I know I’ll draw upon in my work-it was presented in a very accessible way and addressed many of the challenges of evaluation”,

Since the information presented was based on use and application of sound research adult educational theory and methods, participants were better able to apply this knowledge in effective development of a TAg program or use it to enhance their general educational outreach efforts to help better meet local clientele needs.

This project was funded through a Partnership grant from northeast SARE. SARE has approved that with the remaining grant money we will develop a set of teaching modules. The majority of the TAg programs implemented were in soybeans. Because of this we will develop a set of pest management oriented teaching modules appropriate for use in field meetings to address pest management issues for this crop. This grant will be completed in December 2009.